Memorial Services Are Beneficial

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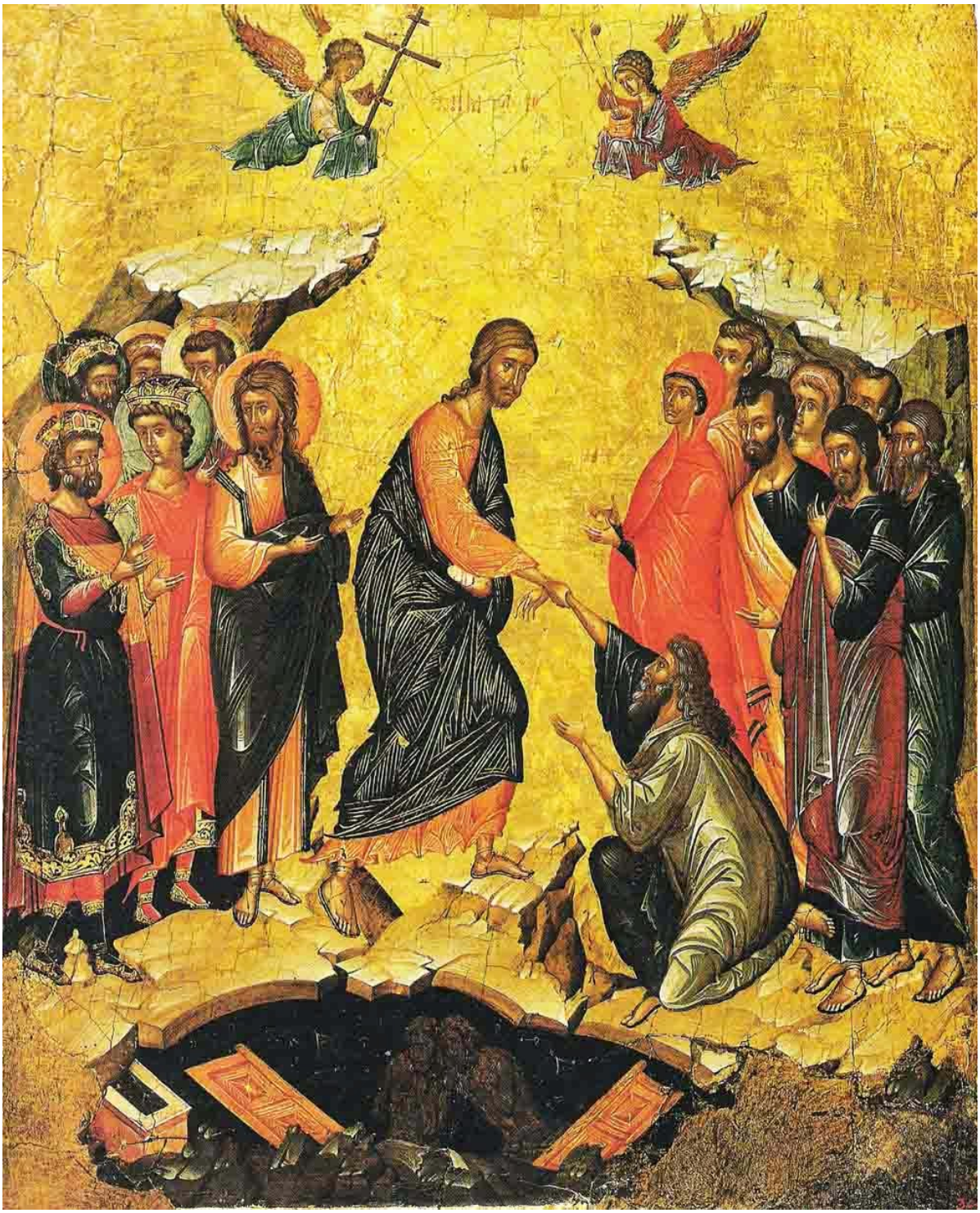

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PROLOGUE

When we open the newspaper in the morning, we will see a column of memorials and, in many cases, columns from top to bottom and when we come out of our house again, we will see wall-mounted memorial notices. All of us do memorials and go to memorials. Who hasn't held a memorial for their loved ones who died? But also, who was not called to join his prayers with others for reposing the deceased's soul? Unfortunately, although memorial services are held, many are ignorant about this subject. For many, they have become a social obligation. They must go to the memorial service, not to unite their prayers for the repose of the soul "for whom the Memorial Service is performed," but so that they may not be misunderstood by those who perform it. That is why they go at the exact time of the Memorial Service, and some do not even enter the Church. They just go so that their relatives can see that they've gone.

There is, therefore, great ignorance as to the benefit of the Memorial Services. Apart from ignorance, there are also many opponents of memorial services. And these are especially heretics, Protestants and Evangelicals. They say that nowhere does the Bible mention memorial services. But let them open their eyes and read the Bible well, and they will see that not only the Bible says so, but also the Sacred Tradition of the early Christian centuries.

In this booklet, you will learn:

1. What is the Church's teaching on Memorial Services?
2. What the Holy Scriptures say about them.
3. What does Sacred Tradition say?
4. What benefits do they bring to the departed and the living?
5. How they should be performed so that benefit comes.

By reading this book, you will learn how to benefit your loved ones beyond the grave.

CHAPTER I:
THE CHURCH'S TEACHINGS ON MEMORIALS

1. The Teaching of the Church

Man, when he dies, is judged by God. Man's further progress in good or evil, in virtue or vice on his own part, ends. According to his moral condition at the moment of death, his final fate in eternity is decided.

The moral condition of man, on which his future lot hangs, is the conclusion of his actions and thoughts. This moral condition of man is determined by his relationship to redemption in Christ. i.e., whether man accepted and appropriated the work of salvation Christ brought us, rejected it and despised the grace offered, or accepted it but fell from it.

Thus, by this partial and individual judgment, those who die are divided into the righteous and saved, those in heaven, and condemned sinners, those in Hades.

The joy or suffering of the person in the midst of it differs for everyone. It is proportional to one's moral quality. It will be a penalty or a reward.

But although the fate of those who die is finally decided, souls do not yet enjoy the perfect measure of reward or suffering until the general Judgment. Then, they will unite with the bodies that will be resurrected and achieve perfect bliss or perfect punishment. The Holy Scriptures say, **"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect"** (Heb. 11:39-40).

This is the Church's teaching on partial judgment. It was formulated by the **Council of Jerusalem in 1672**: "We believe that the souls of those that have fallen asleep are either at rest or in torment, according to what each has done" (Decree 18).

But apart from the saints and the wicked evildoers, many sinners repented while alive but were not wholly cleansed or survived to show fruits worthy of repentance. Those who cannot enter eternal life because of these sinful stains go to Hades.

There, they endure punishments for the sins they committed. But it is possible for the merciful God to comfort and deliver them. But how? Behold:

The Church has always prayed for their deliverance from the evils of Hades. An exemption could occur during the indefinite period of the 'Middle State,' i.e. between the death of each one and the World Judgment. This could be done by pious works, by the supplications of the Church and by offering for them the immaculate sacrifice of the Lord, that is, the Divine Liturgy, which takes place at the Memorial Service.

With this, the Church asks for divine mercy for those who have repented incompletely, but only God exonerates and knows those exempt from punishments and stains of sin.

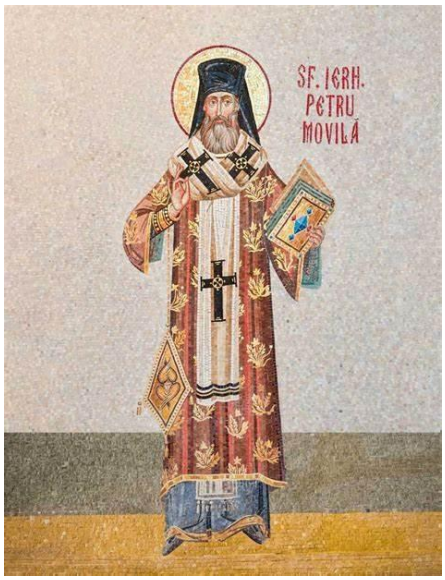
The Confession of Patriarch Dositheus of Jerusalem (1672) writes the following regarding the Memorial Services:

"And the souls of those involved in mortal sins, who have not departed in despair but while still living in the body, though without bringing forth any fruits of repentance, have repented … [their souls] depart into Hades, and there endure the punishment due to the sins they have committed. But they are aware of their future release from there. They are delivered by the Supreme Goodness, through the prayers of the Priests, and the good works which the relatives of each do for their Departed, especially the unbloody Sacrifice benefiting the most, which each offers particularly for his relatives that have fallen asleep, and which the Catholic and Apostolic Church offers daily for all alike. Of course, it is understood that **we do not know the time of their release**. We know and believe there is deliverance for such from their direful condition, before the common resurrection and judgment, but when we know not."

In other words, Those who fell into mortal sins and did not die in despair but repented when they lived but did not bear the fruit of repentance that they should have (i.e. shed tears, knelt in prayer, grieve, comfort the poor, show in practice their love for God and their neighbour), so these souls went to Hades and await the punishment for the sins they committed.

They are, of course, conscious of their deliverance from there, but the utmost goodness of God will free them through the supplications of the priests and the benefactions made by the relatives of each for the departed. In fact, the bloodless sacrifice performed by relatives for their departed and by the Church for all can be of great benefit. We, of course, do not know the time of absolution. But that they shall be delivered from suffering before the common resurrection and judgment, we know and believe. But then we ignore it.

The Confession of Metrophanes Kritopoulos (1589-1639), Patriarch of Alexandria, is considered a confession of our Holy Church. Therefore, in chapter 20, *On Praying for the Deceased*, he states, "Let us pray for the departed by name...". He also says, “I pray for all those who have been sent by God, for their parents, for the prisoners who have been released, and for those who have been comforted and for those who are in prison.”



The Confession of Peter Mogila (1638-1642) says: “After death, the soul cannot be set free or repent and do any work, that it may be redeemed from the bonds of Hades, but only by the Divine Liturgy and prayer and almsgiving, which are done for it by those who live, they are of greatly benefited, and freed from the bonds of Hades.”

The 14th Canon of the Holy Apostles decrees the following: “Let there be ceremonies for the deceased on the third day because Christ was raised on the third day, on the ninth day to remind both the living and the deceased, and on the fortieth day because the Jews mourned for Moses forty days; and let some of their possessions be given as alms on their anniversary, in remembrance of them. But as for the ungodly, it would not help them if even the whole world were given on their behalf.” [Note: this quote is from *The Apostolic Constitutions*]

This is the Church's teaching on the Memorial Service. To the pious to the semi-repentant, they bring benefit. But to the wicked and the reprobate, they do not. But apart from the teaching of the Church, the practice of the Church also speaks of memorials.

2. The Practice of the Church.

Our Holy Church has always held memorial services and prayed for the deceased. They would not be celebrated or prayed for the unfortunate if they were not helpful. This practice of the Church is shown by the following:

(a) The Most Ancient Liturgies

All the Divine Liturgies have prayers for the departed. ***The Liturgy of Mark the Evangelist*** reads:

"And to the spirits of all these give rest, O Master, Lord our God, in the habitations of Thy Saints, in Thy kingdom, vouchsafing to them the good things of Thy promise, which eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, and which have not entered into the heart of man, the things which Thou hast prepared, O Lord, for them that love Thy holy name. **Grant Thou rest to their souls; count them worthy of the kingdom of heaven**…"

Here, Mark the Evangelist clearly shows that he is praying for everyone. "Let everyone's souls rest."

In the ***Liturgy of James the Brother of the Lord***, it is written:

"O Lord God, remember the spirits and all flesh of those Orthodox whom we have commemorated and whom we have not; give them rest in the land of the living, in Your kingdom, in the delight of paradise, in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our fathers, where pain, sorrow and sighing have fled away, where the light of Your face shines and radiates for all time [...] let our offering be acceptable, hallowed by the Holy Spirit, as propitiation for our transgressions and the sins Your people have committed in ignorance, **and for the rest of the souls of those who have fallen asleep**."

In the ***Liturgy of St. Clement***, who was a disciple of the Apostle Peter, we read:

"We further beseech You, Lord, on behalf of Your holy Church that reaches to the ends of the earth [...] and we also make offerings to You on behalf of all Your beloved saints, patriarchs, prophets, righteous men, apostles, martyrs, confessors, bishops, elders,

deacons, subdeacons, lectors, psalters, virgins, and laymen from ages past, and all whose names You know."

As seen from the Liturgy, the Church has always prayed for the departed. The priest always prayed after the consecration of the Holy Gifts:

"Remember all those who have fallen asleep in the hope of the resurrection of eternal life, that You would grant them rest where the light of Your countenance shines."

On her birthday, Pentecost, the Church prays for all her children, saying:

"Hear our supplications and give rest to the souls of Your servants, our fathers and brothers and other kin by blood, and all of the household of faith who have since fallen asleep and whose memorial we keep this day… On this universal and salutary feast, deign to accept petitions for those imprisoned in Hades, thus giving us great hope and relief to the departed from their grievous distress and Your comfort."

"Hear us, humble and pitiable, as we pray to You, and give rest to the souls of Your Servants who have departed this life in a place of light, a place of renewed life, a joyous place, shunned alike by pain and sorrow and sighing. And place their spirits where the Righteous dwell, counting them worthy of peace and repose; for the dead do not praise You, Lord, nor do those in Hades dare to offer You glory, but it is we the living who bless and entreat You and offer You propitiatory prayers and sacrifices for their souls."

And in another prayer of Pentecost, the Church prays:

"Will You, then, Master, accept our prayers and entreaties and give rest to everyone's fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters and children, or of the same family or people, and all the souls that have gone before to their rest in the hope of the resurrection to everlasting life. And place their spirits and names in the Book of Life, the bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the land of the living, in the kingdom of the heavens, in the bliss of Paradise, Your angels of light leading all into Your holy mansions." (**Great Vespers of Pentecost**)

(b) The Diptychs

Prayers for the departed are an Apostolic Tradition and can be seen in the Diptychs of the Church. The Diptychs were also preserved by all the heretical Churches that broke away from the Holy and Orthodox Church, namely the Coptic, the Abyssinian, the Armenian, the Papal and others.

The diptychs are two small boards joined, which close and open. On them were written the names of the Orthodox. As ordered by the Fifth Ecumenical Council, the Deacon read these names after the sanctification of the Holy Gifts when the "Axion Esti" was sung. In the old days, the Deacon would say them to everyone from the ambo.

This is why the people once cried out to Patriarch John of Constantinople: "The diptychs to the ambo! Now is the time to bring the diptychs!" There were three kinds of Diptychs: the Saints, the living and the departed. The Diptychs of the departed are very old, as shown in the Liturgy of Mark the Evangelist. The word “diptych” comes from the Greek word *πτύσσω*, which means to fold. After the Divine Liturgy, the priests folded and kept them in the divine sanctuary. They guarded them with great care.

From all this, it seems that from the beginning, the Church prayed for all the departed, regardless of whether they were good or bad, except for the self-murderers (the non-psychopaths) and the heretics. These unfortunate ones are outside the Church, condemned to eternal Hell.

(c) Saturday of Souls

The Church generally holds annual Memorial Services, known as "Saturday of Souls." She celebrates them for all those who have not received memorial services and have been deprived of their benefits. They were not given Memorial Services because they died far away in foreign lands; they drowned in seas, perished in wildernesses, or were poor and had no one to make them Memorials.

The First Saturday of Souls

Occurs before Meatfare Sunday, The Sunday of the Last Judgment. The Triodion of the Church says the following about this "Saturday of Souls:"

“Since it often happens that certain people suffer death prematurely, in a foreign land, at sea, on trackless mountains, on precipices, in chasms, in famines, wars, conflagrations, and cold weather, and all manner of other deaths, and perhaps, being poor and without resources, they have not been vouchsafed the customary psalter readings and memorial services, moved by love for mankind, the Divine Fathers ordained that the Orthodox Catholic Church make commemoration of all people, a tradition which they inherited from the Holy Apostles, so that those who, due to some particular circumstance, did not receive the customary obsequies individually, **might be included in the present general commemoration, indicating that whatever is done on their behalf confers great benefit on them.** This is one reason why the Church of God performs the commemoration of souls. A second reason is that, since the Fathers intended, as is fitting, to assign the observance of the Second Coming of Christ to the following day, they appointed a commemoration of all souls on this day.”

In Book 8 of the ***Apostolic Constitutions***, chapter 42. there is a provision on ‘How and When We Ought to Celebrate the Memorials of the Faithful Departed and that We Ought Then to Give Somewhat Out of Their Goods to the Poor:’

“Let the **third day** of the departed be celebrated with psalms, and lessons, and prayers, on account of Him who arose within the space of three days; and let the **ninth day** be celebrated in remembrance of the living and of the departed; and the **fortieth day** according to the ancient pattern: for so did the people lament Moses, and the anniversary day in memory of him. And let alms be given to the poor out of his goods for a memorial of him.”

The Memorials, he adds, **benefit the pious, but not the wicked, the destitute:**

“These things we say concerning the pious, for as to the ungodly, if you give all the world to the poor, you will not benefit him at all. For to whom the Deity was an enemy while he was alive, it will certainly be so also when he is departed, for there is no unrighteousness with Him. For the Lord is righteous and has loved righteousness. And, Behold the man and his work.”

Why the Memorial Services take place is also shown in the “Saturday of Souls” troparia:

"O you faithful, remembering today by name all the dead from all the ages who have lived in piety and faith, let us sing praises to the Lord and Saviour, asking Him fervently to give them in the hour of judgement a good defence before our God who judges all the earth…" (***The Lenten Triodion*****,** Vespers Stichera, Saturday of Souls, p. 124)

Another Troparion reads:

"...Give rest in Your courts and the bosom of Abraham to those Your servants from Adam to this present and who have worshipped You in purity, our fathers and brethren, friends and kin, all who in different ways have offered faithful service to You in this life and now have gone to dwell with You, O God, and count them worthy of Your heavenly kingdom." (*Ibid*.)

The same is said in the request which takes place on "Saturday of Souls:"

"... Moreover, we ask for the blessed memory and eternal rest of all those pious Orthodox Christians who have fallen asleep: kings, bishops, priests, monks, deacons, hermits, fathers, forefathers, grandfathers, great-grandfathers, from the very beginning until now; and we ask You to forgive them their faults, both conscious and unconscious." (*Ibid*.)

The Miracle of Kollyva

St. Theodore of Tyron's miracle of kollyva is also related to the "Saturday of Souls."

Julian the Transgressor, when he reigned, wanted to restore the pagan religion. That is why he cruelly persecuted faithful Christians, and the fool wanted people to worship and honour idols and despise the true god.

This God-fighter and Christian persecutor subjected Christians to horrible martyrdom. He pierced their bellies, gouged out their eyes, ripped off their nails, and cut off their tongues. He used spits and pans and fried them like fish.

But the brave Christians endured them with unwavering bravery. But the wretched man knew Christians in the first week of Great Lent are purified by fasting, prayer and services. He, therefore, summoned the Prefect of Constantinople and said to him:

“Because I have used many ways and have not succeeded in persuading Christians to sacrifice to idols and eat idolatrous meat from the sacrifices, I will force them in another way to eat it, willingly or not.
“Christians have a strict fast all this week until the Sabbath. I, therefore, command that all food be taken up out of the marketplace and that nothing be there, except such food and drink as I shall give, and which shall be sprinkled with the blood of our sacrifices. In this way, they will all buy of it and will be forced to eat of the idols. If they do not want to eat of them, they will die of hunger.”

“Now,” the flatterer said, “Prefect, I understand that the king's heart is in the hands of the gods.”

They, therefore, withdrew all food and drink from the market. They only sold the mixed ones sprinkled with the blood of sacrifices.

And this is what Julian did, but God protected his pious believers. He sent St. Theodore to this end and presented himself to the Patriarch openly, not in a dream, and said to him:

“Get up quickly and gather all the faithful. Tell them not to buy any food they sell on the market sprinkled with blood from their sacrifices.”

“And how, my Lord, can they be protected? The rich may be able to because they have a stock of food. But the poor who do not have food for a day, what will they eat?”

“They’re going to eat kollyva,” the martyr answered—boiled wheat. Boil wheat and distribute it to Christians to eat. In my country, we call this boiled wheat kollyva.
So you must do this to keep your flock pure and undefiled.”

“And who are you, sir,” asked the Patriarch, “Who cares for our salvation?”

“I am the Martyr of Christ Theodoros, and the Lord has sent me to help you at this difficult time.”

Immediately afterwards, the Patriarch gathered the faithful people of Christ and revealed to them what he went through in detail. Upon hearing this, the Christians ate kollyba and left the contaminated food on the market until they were forced to withdraw it.

The Christians joyfully thanked God and the beautiful martyr Theodore.
Our holy Church celebrates this miracle of kollyva on the first Saturday of Lent, the so-called Saturday of Souls. This is also the time of St. Theodore's commemoration.

All the houses of Christians make kollyvas and take them to the Churches for the sake of the departed. On this day, there is a visit to the cemeteries, where the families offer kollyva. In many places, the Church makes a tray with kollyva for those who died without heirs and have no one to remember them, as well as those who were killed in the war or perished far away in emigration.

The Second Saturday of Souls

The Church holds the second annual Memorial Service for the souls of the deceased nine days after the Annunciation of Christ, i.e. the Saturday before "Pentecost."

On this day, the Church remembers all those who have fallen asleep from Adam and prays for them. It asks Christ, the God who was taken up into heaven and sat down at the Father's right hand, that they may give him a good apology on the day of judgement. And He may place them at His right hand with the saints and make them worthy heirs of the kingdom of God.

The Church, when she prays for all those who have fallen asleep from Adam to this day, prays not only for Christians—for no Christian was from Adam to Christ—but also for every soul who has lived righteously either by the Mosaic Law or by the unwritten law of conscience. For salvation, granted through Jesus Christ to mankind, became general to those who lived righteously.

And St. John Chrysostom asks:

Why is it for the peace and stability of the world that you have come (God commanded) to pray? Because of all men. And there are robbers, tomb robbers, thieves, and a thousand evil men in all of them (and in all of them there are), but above all, we pray for all. They

may be able to return. "As we pray for the living, we pray for the dead so that we may pray for them also."

The second Memorial Service for the departed was put to the Church very appropriately after the Ascension of the Saviour because, with it, the Lord went into the bosom of the Father and received all authority in heaven and on earth and became Lord of the living and the dead.

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This, then, is the Church's teaching on memorial services.

"All the teaching of the Orthodox Church is based on the Bible and Holy Tradition. And the Bible may speak of them explicitly or obscuredly. However, Sacred Tradition illuminates, interprets and supplements what is obscure or obscured in the Bible.

Let us now see what the Bible says about memorial services.

CHAPTER II:
THE BIBLE ON MEMORIALS

The Protestants say that they do not admit them because there are supposedly no passages in the Bible that explicitly speak of the Memorial Services, that is, of the supplication of the living for the departed. But I ask them: do they have passages of Scripture which expressly forbid the prayers of the living for the dead? Certainly not.

But we have indirect testimonies of Scripture in favour of the intercessions of the living for the dead. Yeah, they say, but to the rich man, who begged Abraham to send Lazarus to hell to comfort him, Abraham expressly said to him: **“There is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence”** (Luke 16:26).

It is not possible, then, say the Protestants, for there to be a transition to Hades from one place to another. How, then, will this transference take place with the memorial services?

But here, if they pay attention, they will see that he is not talking about supplications of the living for the departed. He speaks simply of the **will** of those who have been judged beyond the grave, saying, “They which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us.”

However, if they are careful, he will see that he is not talking about supplications of the living for the departed. He speaks simply of the will of those who have been judged beyond the grave, saying, "Those who want to go forth to us cannot do so..."

But it does not say that it is forbidden for the living to pray for the dead. Therefore, this passage is expressly concerned with the repentance of the dead, not with the prayer of the living for the deceased. Those beyond the grave cannot do anything to improve their position. But it does not forbid the prayer of the living for them.

The Protestants against the Memorials also bear the passage: **“It is appointed unto men once to die but after this the judgment”** (Heb. 9:27).

But this is not expressly contrary to the supplication of the living for the departed. It simply says that they die and will be judged. It says what happens to the deceased, that is, that after death, they are judged. But it says nothing about Memorial Services. However, we have passages of the Holy Scriptures which mention prayers of the living for the dead. And behold.

The Old Testament

In Nehemiah (9:2), we read: “And the children of Israel separated themselves from every stranger, and stood and confessed their sins, and **the iniquities of their fathers.**”

As we see, the Scripture speaks of the living praying for the dead. That is, as the living Israelites confessed their sins that they might be forgiven, they also confessed the sins of their fathers that they might be forgiven safely—Behold supplication for the departed in the Bible.

Also, the Old Testament (2 Maccabees IV 42-45) records that Judas Maccabeus sent two thousand drachmas to Jerusalem to be offered as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of some soldiers who sinned and fell in battle.

Therefore, the soldiers, in order not to be abused if the idolatrous Greeks of Antioch took them prisoners, carried statues of idolatrous gods with them. However, they believed in the True God. What they did was a sin; if they were prisoners, they would say they believed in idols, not the true God. But this was a sin. They would deny God out of fear. They found these statues in their pockets when they were killed in battle.

Then Judas sent money to the Temple in Jerusalem to pray for their souls. The Bible expressly says: **"For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead."** (2 Macc. 12:44).

Behold, the Bible mentions the prayer of the living for the dead. The Apostle Paul repeatedly referred to the Book of Maccabees.

The New Testament

Also, Apostle Paul prays for the sleeping Onesiphorus in the New Testament. In Timothy, he writes, **"The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus"** (1 Tim. 1:16).

And in the passage (1:16), it says: **"Greet the house of Onesiphorus."** But about Onesiphoron, he writes, "The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day" (1 Tim. 1:18).

But does it not make an impression on you that Apostle Paul says, on the one hand, to embrace the house of Onesiphorus, and on the other hand, he simply says, "Lord, give mercy." But does he not also say **"in this day"** as he says of Onesiphorus? (2 Tim. 1:18)

From this, we conclude that Onesiphorus had died. That Onesiphorus was dead is also evident from the embrace, which St. Paul gives to all in the house of Onesiphorus by name, except Onesiphorus, whose name he silences as dead.

Therefore, Paul also says: 'That day.' That is, God may be merciful to his soul on that day of judgment. Therefore, Paul prays for Onesiphorus, who has been killed. Otherwise, the Apostle would not separate the House of Onesiphorus from Onesiphorus himself and pray for Onesiphorus "on that day."

From all this, we can conclude that the Holy Bible's clear passages refer to memorials. There are passages in which prayer is recommended for the departed.

CHAPTER III:
HOLY TRADITION

Our Lord Jesus Christ told his followers, **"And I will be with you always, even to the end of the age"** (Matt. 28:20). He will be with his followers, with his Church without ceasing. The Protestants do not have this because they appeared about five hundred and fifty years ago. Therefore, Christ has not been with them for 1500 years because He says **"all the days."**

But what the Lord said, we Orthodox or Orthodox Church have it. The Lord has been with the Orthodox Church from the beginning.

Together with the Orthodox Church, He was from the beginning and is the Lord because we have Apostolic succession. Prayers for the departed by the living have always continued for 2,000 years. But our Church, with which the Lord is always, always continues the prayers of the living for those who have fallen asleep at the commandment of the Apostles and, therefore, Christ. The second book of Maccabees, which expressly speaks of prayers of the living for the dead, is one the Church has accepted since the Apostolic age. Therefore, the Tradition of the Church speaks clearly about the Memorial Services. And behold:

The Church Fathers

Many Fathers or Church writers of the early centuries refer to memorial services. And behold,

Tertullian (A.D. 200) says: "We make sacrifices and prayers for the departed, on the anniversary of their birthday (i.e. death)."

Origen (A.D. 260) writes: "It is both just and beneficial to make public prayers in memorial services for the Saints."

St Cyprian (250 AD) affirms that in his time, Christians considered offering sacrifices and prayers on behalf of the Martyrs as an essential duty.' (*Epistle 37*).

Arnobius (305 A.D.) says: "The Christians in their sanctuaries offer prayers for the repose and salvation of the dead (*Against the Heathen*, Book IV)."

St. Augustine (355-430 A.D.) wrote a book, *On Caring for the Dead*, showing that it has always been the Church's practice, since the beginning of Christianity, to pray and offer sacrifices for the deceased, which he attributes to the Apostolic Tradition.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, in the *Divine Mystagogy*, writes about the Memorial Services of the departed as follows:

"We also pray on behalf of the Holy Fathers and bishops who have fallen asleep before us and in a word of all who in past years have fallen asleep among us, believing that it will be a very great benefit to the souls, for whom the supplication is put up, while that holy and most awful sacrifice is set forth."

We pray, he says, for all the departed because we believe that it will benefit their souls since, at that hour, the horrible sacrifice of the Lord is before us.

St. John Chrysostom says:

"Do not doubt that it will bear good fruit. It is not in vain that the deacon cries out on behalf of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and those who perform the ceremonies for them; it is not the deacon who makes these cries, but the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Elsewhere, he says:

"It is not without reason that the apostles instructed us to commemorate the departed during the sacrifice of the awesome mysteries, for they knew this would be of great use to the dead." (*Homilies on Philippians*)

In other words, the Apostles did not legislate, without reason, that the departed should be mentioned in the Divine Liturgy. They know that they are getting a lot of profit and benefits.

St. Epiphanios writes, "The prayer for the departed is beneficial." (*Panarion* 75).

St. Athanasios writes, "Even if the deceased brother is laid to rest in the open air, do not neglect to bring oil and candles to his grave and call on Christ the Lord; for this is acceptable to God and will provide much comfort for the man. The oil and candle are a

burnt offering, and the divine and bloodless sacrifice is propitiation. The reward for every good work will be greater if it is done to help the poor."

In his Testament, **St. Ephraim the Syrian** writes, "After my departure, remember me in your prayers...The dead benefit from the offering of memorials by the living Saints."

St. James the New Martyr, in 1520, when he was taken to martyrdom, sent a letter to his disciples, writing that they should perform the Memorial Services for him according to the order of the Church.

St. John of Damascus left us a treatise called *Concerning the departed in faith, as the liturgies for them take place and benefit them*.

Do you see that the Holy Tradition also speaks of Memorial Services? They were admitted and performed by those close to the Apostolic era and the time of the Lord. They could never have performed them if not handed down by the Holy Apostles and the Lord.

CHAPTER IV:
WHO BENEFITS FROM MEMORIAL SERVICES?

a) The Departed

The Memorial Services benefit first of all those who have fallen asleep, who have passed away from us and are now in the hands of God. However, Protestants and Evangelicals here do not hold memorial services. These unfortunate ones have fallen into Rationalism; they have too much logic. They're reaching unbelief. Besides, faith is beyond reason. These Protestants, therefore, say that it is not reasonable to pray for the departed because:

"The Bible says: **'It is appointed unto men to die once and after that judgment'** (Hebrews 5:27). Since then, God pronounces His judgment soon after death, how will He then pronounce His judgment on a sinner whom He has condemned? If He does this, it means either that His first decision was wrong or that the soul in Hades, through repentance, forced Him to recall His decision. But we know that 'in Hades, there is no repentance.'"

"But God does not issue a false command. Therefore, the sinner must stay in Hades; the Memorials are unnecessary. These are the words of the Protestants, the Evangelicals."

But we will tell them some reasonable thoughts, with the opposite conclusion from theirs:

They say that the supplication of the living for the departed is contrary to God's infallible judgment for a sinner beyond the grave and to the impossibility of the sinner's repentance in Hades. But does not the prayer in general, not only of the living for the dead but also of the living for the living, contradict the wisdom of God? God rules the world by specific laws. But man, through his prayer, which God hears, intervenes and cancels or modifies His decisions. How, then, does God, thanks to one's prayer, annul or modify His decisions? Does this mean that God previously made a wrong decision?

For example, God decides to destroy the Israelites because they made the golden calf. But Moses prays for his people. The Lord then **recalls His decision.** Thanks to Moses' prayer, **"And the Lord was prevailed upon to preserve his people"** (Exod. 32, 14). The Lord **"said to do,"** i.e. He decided to punish the Israelites. But thanks to the prayer of Moses, **"The Lord is merciful of wickedness,"** without the Israelites repenting.

The Lord pronounced a sentence of condemnation upon the living Israelites who sinned, which was annulled or set aside by the prayer of Moses without repentance on the part of the sinners.

But we do not reproach God for revoking His decisions. But why, when a living man prays for those who have fallen asleep and are condemned by God, do we think that it is impossible for our prayer for them to be heard? Is not this also reasonable? Why shouldn't the prayers of the living for the dead be heard when:

a. these prayers are made in supplication and faith,
b. the dead, for whom prayers are made, are amenable to divine mercy and
c. when the fulfillment of supplications does not contradict any divine Justice and Goodness.

Do you see, Christian, that the prayers of the living for the departed are also reasonable? They have been ordained because they benefit those who have fallen asleep.

Our Holy Church has determined that memorial services should be held according to Apostolic Tradition. This Apostolic Tradition is based on the Holy Bible." He ordained that they should be performed for the benefit they bring to the dead for whom they are performed.

Of course, no one can be assured that he could live religiously indifferent and sinful and be saved only by the Memorial Services that others will give him. The present life is a stage in which man receives divine grace. It is a stage of moral work, labour, toils and struggles to form a Christian, moral, virtuous, holy character to be saved in the kingdom of God.

But when man repels and systematically and persistently persecutes the divine Grace and forms an evil, perverse, satanic and unrepentant character, he is referred by death to Judgment. For this, the Lord cries: **"Work until the end of the day, for the night is coming when no man can work."** No benefit comes from the Memorial Services for him, who left utterly unrepentant. But we do not know that, and we do it for everyone.

Only those who commit suicide, the non-mentally ill, are not permitted Memorial Services. Those who have perished locked the door of Paradise alone and set the keys at the bottom of the ocean, never to be found again. Memorial services are also not held for

non-Orthodox heretics because they are outside the Church. And outside the Church, there is no salvation. They blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, which by divine grace works for their salvation. As the Lord said, these are unforgivable, now and forever in the future. "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." (Mt. 12:31-32).

He also said: “But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation” (Mk. 3:29). It is terrible to die a heretic or commit suicide. We know they have no salvation; therefore, the Church does not hold memorial services for them.

But we, as we have said, we do not know about the others, which is why we hold Memorial Services for everyone.

But to those who lived here Christianly but "wearing the flesh and believing in the world" fell into sins and who, through the repentance that followed, did not reach perfection, for them we say, perform the Memorials. But how much benefit they bear, we do not know. But they do.

St. John the Damascene says they bring **“some benefit”** (*ονησιν τινά*).

But St. Ephraim the Syrian says: "The mortals are benefited, in offerings of remembrance, instead of the living Saints."

Also, **St. John Chrysostom emphasizes:** "Do not doubt that it will bear good fruit. It is not the deacon who makes these cries, but the gift of the Holy Spirit,” as we have seen above.

How can they fail to benefit when God's child is offered a sacrifice for them, when He is slaughtered for them and says: "Father, please take pity on them for My sake"? How is that possible, then?

This is also seen in the life of **St. John the Merciful.** There, we read the following:

"At one time, there was an illness in Alexandria, and the Saint went alone and visited the sick. He buried their dead, saying that liturgies and prayers greatly benefit the dead and the living. He even related the incident to them:

“The Persians had captured a Cypriot, and his relatives thought him dead. They, therefore, held Memorial Services, according to custom. But after four years, this man returned and learned that memorial services were being held for him. He then told them that a very important man appeared before them every time they held a memorial service. One day, he untied his chain, set him free, and immediately disappeared.”

“This is what the Saint said to show how much benefit the souls of the dead get from liturgies and memorial services.”

b) Memorial Services also Benefit the Living.

Memorial services for the departed are not superfluous. They benefit the soul of the departed but also of the giver. We, too, are benefited by the memorials of the living. We show our love for them through memorials. Man is not an animal. With the Memorial Service, he performs a work of love. If the love you show to the helpless is praiseworthy of God, much more is the love you show to the helpless, by which you try to help the one beyond the grave who cannot help himself there. “God,” writes John of Damascus, “wills that all may be benefited by one another, both alive and dead. But he who strives for the salvation of his neighbour, first of all, is himself a benefactor, not the other.”

Then shall we who are afflicted be comforted, and we who are afflicted, Death maketh sorrow unbearable. It abruptly separates loved ones. But prayer and the Memorial Service are the only communication with them. There is no other communication with our loved ones. Stay away from spiritualists and mediums.

Avoid spiritism and mediums

We emphasize this mainly because, unfortunately, many people, moved by their pain, go to Spiritualism to ask the mediums about their loved ones who have died. And they get answers from the mediums. But Satan speaks through them, and the unfortunate ones think they communicate with their loved ones while being deceived. It is a grievous sin. For the Christian goes to the devil, the enemy of God. This is a “washout.” It is as if the Christian is being unbaptized. Therefore, even if he repents, he has the heaviest penalty (rule) from the Church.

Be careful, my brother, do not get carried away and go to such satanic doors. Do not be damned, and do not distress the soul of your beloved dead. His grief is great when he sees you, on the one hand, becoming Satan's plaything and, on the other, an enemy of God and angering God. Since you go to Spiritualism and mediums, why do you bother with Memorial Services? God doesn't listen to you. He no longer accepts them from you.

In Kalamata many years ago, there was a preacher, Polycarp Andronis, by name. He still lives. He went to their meeting room to prove to the Spiritualists that evil spirits appear in their meetings, not our dead. He asked them to summon the well-known Preacher of

Athens, the most meek and confessed saint Dionysios Farazoulin, who had recently passed away. A spirit did appear, and he said to him:

"Brother Polycarp, I am Dionysius.
"You are Satan," replied the Preacher.
"Don't you know me? Have you forgotten me, Polycarp?"
"You are not Dionysius; you are Satan," repeated the Preacher.
"Remember, Polycarpe. We have lived together, the spirit reiterated.
"You are Satan," I tell you. "You are not Dionysius Farazoulis," insists the Preacher.

Then, the spirit became angry; he was unnerved. He turned everything in the room upside down. When they came to their senses, the Preacher said, "Do you see that it was a satanic and evil spirit? Because Dionysios Farazoulis, as is well known, was meek and holy and never got angry in his life!"

Stay away from the mediums:

The only communication with the souls of our dead is through prayer and memorial services. By these alone, you can benefit the departed.

CHAPTER V:
HOW AND WHEN SHOULD MEMORIAL SERVICES BE DONE?

How and when they should be done.

We have seen the benefit of the Memorials to the dead and the living. But to be beneficial, they must be done correctly.

1) On the appointed days.

To be celebrated on the appointed days. On the 3rd, 9th, and 40th day, then 6 months and after one year. Also, at any time and whenever relatives and friends want, it is good to hold a Memorial Service. The confession of Patriarch Mitrophanous, as we have seen, says, “So, we pray for the departed each by name on the first day after their death, as well as the third, the ninth, the twentieth, the fortieth, then after three months and then six months, and finally after one year. After that, as often as the friends and relatives of the deceased wish to repeat this. We do not object to additional memorial services.

2) To be anti-memorial service is unacceptable.

A memorial service must be held. We emphasize this mainly because many do not hold a memorial service but give "in memory of." It is one thing to give alms and another to hold a memorial service. Alms given on behalf of the soul are good and beneficial. But nothing can replace the sacrifice of Christ. The only thing we can offer to God, which he gladly accepts, is the sacrifice of his Son. That is why we go to the Church with the bread and wine, which are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. From this, the deceased's portion comes out and is placed on the Holy Disc, near the Lamb and the portions of the Virgin Mary, the Angels, the Prophets, the Hierarchs, the Martyrs, the Confessors, the Temperate and the whole Church.

The whole family of God is there, and in it, the name of our departed one is entered and remembered. It is great that the name of our deceased is also mentioned, where Christ and all His Church are. St. John Chrysostom says, "It is a tremendous honour to be named in the presence of the Lord, as the awesome sacrifice of His death is being made, the ineffable mysteries…As long as the mysteries are on the altar, it is an incredible honour to have one’s name be called.”

St. Nectarios writes that the memorials are an indisputable Tradition. From this, we are taught to pray at the offering of the Holy Gifts and to place their portions before the Holy Bread, near the portions of the living, whose names are commemorated. But after the consecration of the Holy Gifts and Holy Communion and the commemoration of those already mentioned in the Intention on the horrible altar, their portions are poured into the Holy Chalice in the Body and Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ, which was "poured out for the salvation of the world," and dipped in the Blood of the Lord. "Which is offered unto them as a sacrifice before the Philanthropic God, who accepteth the sacrifice and bringeth it unto Him for grace, sanctification and redemption, for if the body of sin be made the means of the salvation proclaimed to believers and the reprobate, it is done." (hinders).

3) With Kollyva.

Kollyva is needed at Memorial Services. Kollyva originally meant a grain of wheat, which was used to measure gold. Afterwards, it meant the boiled wheat we take to Church for Memorial Services. Wheat is symbolic: it symbolizes the resurrection of the dead. As it is buried in the earth, it rots there, grows again, and becomes more mature, and so does our dead. He, who was buried and divided into those things of which he was composed, will rise again by the power of God at the common resurrection with a body that is now incorruptible.

4) With Divine Liturgy.

The Divine Liturgy is indispensable. Relatives and friends must attend it to pray for the repose of his soul. When the priest exclaims, **"Your own of Your own,"** they will say, "O God, rest his soul." It's wrong to have a memorial service without the Divine Liturgy.

Unfortunately, many of the guests do not go to church. They wait precisely when the announcements say to arrive. They arrive breathless so that their relatives won't misunderstand them and so they won't say they didn't show up. But then, no benefit comes from their presence, perhaps even harm to the soul.

I will never forget the following:

Once before I went to the pulpit to speak at the time of Communion, I was approached by the trustees:

“Today, they told me, you must preach a great sermon. Keep it long because we are having a memorial service, and they have not yet come to do it. We must wait for them!”

The sermon, of course, became regular. Because they had not yet come, the singers were obliged to sing and repeat the Communion hymn, thus troubling the congregation until the family showed up. But, my Christians, this is not a memorial. They need to attend the Divine Liturgy. They need prayer during the Liturgy. Prayer is needed at the Liturgy and at the Memorial that will follow. It even takes effort to correct and live a Christian life. The memorial must lead us to serious thoughts about death and the soul's salvation.

"But when the impious are gathered together, who do not want to have a relationship with God and stand - if they even enter the Church - disrespectfully with their hands behind their backs, how can they benefit the deceased? If the deceased had a voice, he would tell them: "Go away, lest you burden my position. … and that your presence be missed."

And indeed. When one of the prosecutors is arrested, and they come forward and beg him to be fired by thieves, burglars and criminals, will he listen to them? Will they not burden the position of the arrested man because he had such friends?

On the contrary, it is a very good custom for relatives to confess and to partake of the Holy Mysteries during the Memorial Service." But one thing they need to pay attention to. Not to commune for the eyes of the world if they have sins for which the spiritual would not allow them to receive communion.

5) Without vanity.

Unfortunately, vainglory and selfishness do not leave people in death or Memorial Services. While a tray of boiled wheat is sufficient, they order luxurious trays with plenty of sugar so the wheat cannot be seen. They also fill the church with pots and a forest of flowers and greenery. But this is not how our dead enter "into greener pastures."

One sees so much other luxury and vanity. At the same time, however, they grumble and attack the priests and the Church because they will pay for the maintenance of the Church and the staff. But then the deceased would say, "It would be better if there were no memorial."

Even if they call a High Priest, they do not invite him to pray as a High Priest, but out of selfishness and vanity to make it appear that they are holding a High Priestly Memorial. They have the right to read their own Archpriestly Memorial Service separately and not with the others together.

How worldly and vainly do the unfortunate think?

Therefore, for the Memorial Service to be beneficial, it must be done as it should be.

EPILOGUE:

Maybe I bored you readers. Because many people are against the Memorial Services, we had to prove that:

1 - It is the teaching of the Church to perform the Memorial Services, which she received from the Apostles.
2 - The Bible recommends them.
3 - The entire Sacred Tradition of the first Christian centuries and later speaks about them.
4 - We also had to see the benefits they bring to the dead and those performing them.

That is why we were forced to use the patristic texts and passages of the Bible in their entirety.

Having said that, you must be convinced that the Memorial Services are indeed necessary and beneficial. Besides, who are those who speak out against the Memorial Services? They are religiously indifferent, heretics and unbelievers. But why do they care about Memorials? They do not hold memorial services because they are alienated from God and the Church.

We believers, however, never pay attention to these unbelievers. That is up to us. The Bible advises us to pray for our departed loved ones.

According to the Apostolic Tradition, the Church has received and always performed Memorial Services. Are these unbelievers coming today to correct Christianity and speak against Memorial Services? But even if they were Apostles and Saints, we would not listen to them. The Apostle Paul teaches, “Even if an angel comes down from heaven and teaches you contrary to what you have received, do not accept him.” So, let the unbelievers keep their opinion of themselves.

But, if we love our loved ones who have left us, we should perform their ordered Memorial Services. With them, we benefit their souls, and we benefit ourselves greatly.

But one thing we must pay attention to, dear. We do not wait until after death to receive forgiveness through the Memorial Services. Because the Memorial Services are “of some

benefit.” Besides, how do you know if people will be found after your death and if they will be faithful to bend God's Goodness or if they will do so and anger God more?

Take care of your Memorial Services by yourself. Let Churches and monasteries receive Memorial Services and be remembered, as many used to do and do now. But your relatives too, if they do, will stop in time. From now on, let your memorial services be held in temples and monasteries and be remembered as they did in the past, and many do it now. But even if your relatives commemorate you, they will stop in time. However, see to it that it becomes an eternal memorial. If you noticed, three times, the “eternal memory” is said at the end of the Memorial. Why is it said? What does it mean? Let this, i.e. the Memorial, be grasped eternally as if it were to take place eternally. And this, because after tens and hundreds and thousands of years, and millions, who will be found to hold a Memorial for you?

Don't tell me you're writing this to sell your books. I, dear, as I have said before, do not receive a single drachma from my books. They are given for the anti-heretical struggle. But it is written only to enlighten the world and to learn how much benefit the Memorial Services are so that their beloved dead are not deprived of it. They themselves benefit from it because the Memorial Services are beneficial.

Memorial Service

People: Blessed are You, O Lord, teach me Your commandments.

The choir of Saints has found the fountain of life and the door of Paradise. May I also find the way through repentance. I am the lost sheep: O Savior, call me back and save me.

People: Blessed are You, O Lord, teach me Your commandments.

Of old, You created me from nothing and honoured me with Your divine image. But when I disobeyed Your commandment, You returned me to the earth from which I was taken. Lead me back again to Your likeness, so that the ancient beauty may be refashioned.

People: Blessed are You, O Lord, teach me Your commandments.

I am an image of Your ineffable glory, though I bear the scars of my transgressions. Take pity on me, the work of Your hands, Master, and cleanse me by Your compassion. Grant me the desired homeland for which I long, making me again a citizen of Paradise.

People: Blessed are You, O Lord, teach me Your commandments.

Give rest, O God, to Your servant(s), and place him (*her, them*) in Paradise where the choirs of the Saints and the righteous, O Lord, will shine as the stars of heaven. To Your departed servant(s) give rest, O Lord, overlooking all his (*her, their*) offenses.

People: Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Let us devoutly praise the threefold radiance of the one God as we sing: Holy are You, the Father without beginning, the co-eternal Son, and the divine Spirit. Illumine us who worship You in faith and deliver us from the eternal fire.

People: Now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Rejoice, gracious Lady, who gave birth to God in the flesh for the salvation of all, and through whom the human race has found salvation. Through you, pure and blessed Theotokos, may we find Paradise.

People: Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Glory to You O God. (3)

Tone Eight

People: With the Saints give rest, O Christ, to the soul(s) of Your servant(s) where there is no pain, no sorrow, no sighing, but life everlasting.

Tone Four

People: Among the spirits of the righteous perfected in faith, give rest, O Savior, to the soul(s) of Your servant, keeping it (*them*) in the blessed life which is from You, O loving One.

People: In your place of rest, O Lord, where all Your saints repose, give rest also to the soul of Your servant, for You alone are immortal.

People: Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

People: You are our God who descended into Hades and loosened the pains of those who were held captive. Grant rest also, O Savior, to the soul of Your servant.

Now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

You the only pure and spotless Virgin, who ineffably gave birth to God, intercede for mercy and forgiveness of the soul of your servant(s).

Priest: Have mercy upon us, O God, according to Your great mercy; we pray to You, hear us and have mercy.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3)

Priest: Again we pray for the repose of the soul(s) of the departed servant(s) of God (*Name*) and for the forgiveness of all his (*her, their*) sins, both voluntary and involuntary.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3)

Priest: May the Lord God grant his (*her, their*) soul(s) rest where the righteous repose. For the mercies of God, the kingdom of heaven, and the forgiveness of his (*her, their*) sins.

People: Grant this, O Lord.

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: O God of spirits and of all flesh, You trampled upon death and abolished the power of the devil, giving life to Your world. Give rest to the soul(s) of Your departed servant(s) (*Name*) in a place of light, in a place of green pasture, in a place of refreshment, from where pain, sorrow, and sighing have fled away. As a good and loving God, forgive every sin he (*she, they*) has (*have*) committed in word, deed, or thought, for

there is no one who lives and does not sin. You alone are without sin. Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your word is truth.

Priest: For You are the resurrection, the life, and the repose of Your departed servant(s) (*Name*), Christ our God, and to You we offer glory, with Your eternal Father who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

The Dismissal

Priest: Glory to You, O God, our hope, glory to You.

Lord of the living and the dead, the immortal King and Risen Christ, our true God, through the intercessions of His all-pure and spotless holy Mother; of the holy, glorious, and praiseworthy Apostles; of our venerable and God-bearing Fathers; of the holy and glorious forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; of His holy and righteous friend Lazaros, who lay in the grave four days; and of all the saints; place the soul(s) of His servant(s) (*Name*), departed from us, in the dwelling place of the righteous; give rest to him (*her, them*) in the bosom of Abraham; and number him (*her, them*) among the saints and have mercy on us, as a good God who loves mankind.

People: Amen.

Priest: May your memory be eternal, brother worthy of blessedness and everlasting memory. (3)

For Women

Priest: May your memory be eternal, sister worthy of blessedness and everlasting memory. (3)

For Many

Priest: May their memories be eternal, sisters and brothers worthy of blessedness and everlasting memory. (3)

People: Eternal be his (*her, their*) memory. Eternal be his (*her, their*) memory. May his (*her, their*) memory be eternal. (3)

Priest: Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us and save us.

People: Amen.